

I PETER 1:13-21
BE HOLY!

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to I Peter chapter 1 as we continue our in-depth study of I Peter.

Keep in mind that Peter is writing to Christians who have been dispersed throughout Asia Minor or modern-day Turkey, for their faith in Jesus Christ.

And in the midst of these trials they were facing, in all that they were going through, the persecution that was growing against Christians, Peter speaks of them rejoicing!

As you read through these letters here in the New Testament there seems to be a lot of talk about trials and joy!

Why is that?

Because it was a reality of their life because of their faith and yet, joy flowed from their lives because their joy was based on the Lord – an internal reality and not the things that were happening around them – an external reality.

And it is part of our life as well. Look at this nation and where it is headed. Look at this world and where it is headed. Look at the persecution that is growing against Bible believing Christians!

I guess you can say that as we look at what they went through it gives us encouragement for the things we are going through.

And remember what we said regarding this letter. If you want to sum up this letter, it can be as simple as this – ***WHERE THERE'S CHRIST, THERE'S HOPE!***

You see, no matter what comes our way, as we are focused on Christ, He will see us through those times!

We need to have that hope because without hope, we are lost, we are in despair, what is the point!

But God gives us so much hope as we saw last time!

And Peter's point as we saw last week, is that we can be overflowing with joy because of all that God has done for us, because our salvation is secure in Him, because our inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, it will not fade away, and not only has the Lord reserved for us a place in heaven but our salvation is kept by the power of God.

You see, how can you not rejoice in that!

Those are wonderful promises of God for us, and it should give us great hope that there is a time coming when all this pain and suffering will be gone.

This life is short, but we can spend an eternity with the Lord and why not start right now having that joy because of the hope we have in Christ! He is coming back!

Also, God will use trials in our lives to help us to grow in the faith, nothing happens without a purpose, without a reason, even though we might not always understand it or see it.

Think about these struggling Christians and Peter is telling them to set their hope fully on the future coming of Christ.

And what was an encouragement to them the Holy Spirit is trying to encourage us in the days we are living in. Jesus is coming, let's get ready!

And that is really the focus of the rest of this chapter, holiness or the sanctification process.

Keep in mind that in our previous studies we focused on – ***THE SALVATION OF THE BELIEVER!***

That truly is where it all begins, but it does not end there.

Once we come to that saving faith in Christ – ***JUSTIFICATION*** - then we see – ***THE SANCTIFICATION PROCESS OF THE BELIEVER!***

In other words, God is molding and shaping our lives into His image, and it is a lifelong process for us.

That is why I have called this study – ***BE HOLY!***

That truly is what God is doing in our lives as we will see this morning. The problem, many times, is we are not always listening and if we do listen, we don't obey!

Let me show you what I mean.

Several weeks back I was cutting the grass and doing some edging on the lawn. I also needed to reset some of my bait traps for mice.

Now the key to these boxes was on the chain that had the key for the shed. And I am a creature of habit and when I unlock the shed door, I always put the key in the lock so I don't lock the door with the key in the shed!

So I went into the shed to get the key for the box for these bait traps and when I was done I went back into the shed and instead of putting the key in the lock like I usually do, I set it on the side.

As soon as I did that, I had this feeling, ***“Joe, you need to put the key into the lock so you don't forget it!”***

Now I was in a hurry, trying to get everything done and I thought, ***“I will remember to get the key!”***

So when I was all done I grabbed the lock and locked the shed and as soon as I did that, I thought, ***“I forgot the key in the shed!”***

I was not happy! It took me about an hour to get that lock off the shed door and then I had to go and buy another lock!

What is my point?

My point is this. God speaks to us and warns us of danger, He shows us things we need to avoid, He tells us things we need to do, and many times we think, ***“I can handle this. This is not a problem!”***

And, in the end, we find out that God knew what He was talking about!

Now here is this issue of – ***HOLINESS!***

I am sorry to say that many Christians make all kinds of excuses for their behavior, or they just ignore this idea of holiness.

Let me share this with you to show you what I mean. We are told,

In looking over the landscape of the Church today, many people have noticed that the holiness of God has largely been forgotten, overlooked and ignored.

The late J. I. Packer claimed that the contemporary Christian finds holiness to be outdated and irrelevant.

Kevin DeYoung wrote, ***“Shouldn’t those most passionate about the Gospel and God’s glory also be those most dedicated to the pursuit of godliness? I worry that there is an enthusiasm gap and no one seems to mind.”***

John MacArthur put it like this: *“The doctrine of sanctification has become unpopular in our time. There has been much talk about the doctrine of election, of justification, of glorification ... But the doctrine that has fallen into the greatest disuse is this doctrine of sanctification.”*

MacArthur, Packer, and DeYoung all rightly point out that too few Christians seem to care about sanctification or about pursuing holiness in their personal lives; and too few churches seem to preach anything that resembles a call for believers to be holy.

The failure of the church and the Christian to pursue holiness has everything to do with the holiness of God because the chief reason why the Church today fails to pursue holiness is because the Church has forgotten that our God is a holy God.

Many churches fail to recognize that we serve a God who is absolutely, unchangeably, and eternally holy. Churches have trivialized God and ignored certain attributes of God that we don't like or that seem out of step with the times.

The evangelical church, in its never-ending quest to be cool, relevant, accessible, unoffensive, relatable, and thought well of by the world, has jettisoned the holiness of God because it has no place in a church that wants a seat at the world's table or a church that wants to be attractive to ungodly, unholy people.

Calling attention to this problem is vital because the failure to appreciate, love, and proclaim the holiness of God has disastrous consequences.

It results in worship that is frivolous and trivial.

When we walk into church, we should almost feel like we are leaving this present world and stepping into the presence of God in Heaven.

Heaven is a holy place, where God dwells and where His holiness is worshipped and adored. Heaven is not a place for trifles, for silliness, for trivialities. There should be a reverence and a fear and awe of God in worship.

Many churches have abandoned any sense of the holiness of God or any element of reverence or awe before God. These churches seem to have an overwhelming desire to minimize the holiness of God to ensure the comfort of the sinner.

Attendees are left with the impression that it doesn't really matter how they live, or maybe even what they believe - because *“God loves them and so do we,”* and *“God accepts us all and isn't really that concerned about holiness.”*

This kind of worship service presents a god that is totally foreign to the God of the Bible. It takes what should be a transcendent, awe-inspiring encounter with a holy God who transforms us, turning it into something trivial and meaningless.

It also centers worship on the felt needs of sinners instead of something that is supposed to be about the glory of God.

This is the greatest crime in neglecting the holiness of God because such an approach robs God of the worship He rightly deserves from His people.

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Obviously, this is an important topic, and it is what Peter is going to share in this letter –
BE HOLY!

Again, this is not a subject that many like to teach on because it shines the light of God upon their lives and areas that they have to change. And to do that you may lose some people because they want to do what they want to do, and they don't want anyone telling them that they can't do it!

Well, I am sorry, but I am not telling you not to do this or do that, God is, and you do need to listen to Him. And we will see how this all plays out in our lives as we go through these verses this morning here in I Peter chapter 1.

I have broken down the verses we will be looking at this morning into the following main points.

They are,

GET SERIOUS – I PETER 1:13-14

BE HOLY – I PETER 1:15-16

GOD IS OUR HELP – I PETER 1:17

GOD HAS REDEEMED US – I PETER 1:18-21

With that as our introduction, let's begin reading in I Peter chapter 1 beginning in verse 13 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and look at this topic – ***BE HOLY!***

I PETER 1**VERSES 13-14**

Peter starts out with the word “**Therefore.**” And the idea here is that when you see all that God has done for you, that He has saved you and no one can take that away from you, then you need to live accordingly!

In other words, Peter is making some applications for us to live our lives from the spiritual truths that he has just talked about!

Remember what Peter wrote regarding the trials, the persecution that they were facing, **“that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”** I Peter 1:7.

In other words, Jesus is coming back and because of all that He has done for us, we need to prepare ourselves and – ***GET SERIOUS!***

And the first thing Peter tells us is that we are to “**... gird up the loins of your mind.**”

That phrase, “**gird up the lions**” is not one we use today.

To put it into our vernacular we might say, “***It’s time to roll up your sleeves.***”

You see, back then men wore long robes, which were fine for walking in but were a hindrance when you tried to run or do battle.

It would be like wearing a long dress and trying to run a race. It would be very easy to fall, to stumble as you trip over it.

Peter’s point is this. God wants us to live a life that is ready. You are not going to place yourself in a situation that will cause you to stumble, to fall.

Prepare your mind so the enemy doesn't trip you up! This is a conscious act of our will to obey God, to follow His commands, to live a life that is holy, honoring Him, not because the Law makes us, but out of our deep love for Him!

The Devil knows that if he can control the way we think, what we lust after, then he can control the way we live.

Remember what John told us in I John 2:15-17, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”**

Listen to how The Amplified Bible puts these verses, it will drive home this point. It reads, **“Do not love or cherish the world or the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh [craving for sensual gratification] and the lust of the eyes [greedy longings of the mind] and the pride of life [assurance in one's own resources or in the stability of earthly things] - these do not come from the Father but are from the world [itself]. And the world passes away and disappears, and with it the forbidden cravings (the passionate desires, the lust) of it; but he who does the will of God and carries out His purposes in his life abides (remains) forever.”**

Make no mistake about it, the battle is for our mind, to let the things of this world control you instead of the things of God that will set you free! The enemy wants you to love the things of this world and we see that happening with Christians today.

The world is there trying to conform us into its image, make us look like them instead of being transformed into the image of Christ!

And when we surrender to the lust of the flesh, the things of this world, we become slaves, and we end up doing its bidding!

What can we do about this?

Peter is telling us that we need to - ***PREPARE YOUR MIND FOR ACTION!***

In other words, get rid of loose and sloppy thinking. It means to control what you think about, those things you decide to set your mind upon.

Don't allow garbage to fill your mind because, as you do, garbage will flow out of your life!

Paul, in Romans 12:1-2 tell us, **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”**

You see, as you let your guard down you give Satan an opportunity to trip you up!

Don't let him, allow the Word of God to transform your life – be prepared!

Next, Peter speaks of the fact that we need to - ***BE SOBER OR SELF-CONTROLLED!***

The idea here is that this word “. . . *denotes a condition free from every form of mental and spiritual loss of self-control; it is an attitude of self-discipline that avoids the extremes.*”

(Hiebert)

What Peter is saying is that we are not to allow the outward circumstances to control our life but to allow the Spirit of God to control us!

Peter is speaking of mental and spiritual drunkenness or excess – don't let that control your life.

Paul, in Ephesians 5:15-21 tells us, **“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.”**

Thus, be continually filled by the Spirit of God and you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh!

And yes, it is a battle. But what are you filling your mind with that is causing you to lose control of your life?

Paul wants us to focus our life upon the Lord, to share with each other the Words of God, singing praises to God, giving thanks to God, submitting to one another in the fear of God.

“Pastor Joe, you mean to tell me that this is what I need to do if I want to live a life of holiness?”

Yes!

Notice where your mind is focused upon! You are focused on the Lord and because of that your words, your actions will bless those around you! In other words, your life is being transformed by the power of God into the likeness of Jesus!

On the other end of the spectrum, as we fill our minds with the things of this world, then that is what will flow from our lives and it is not a good thing, not at all!

And if you are still not sure about this, notice what Peter said next, what we are to do. He tells us that we need to - ***SET OUR HOPE FULLY ON THE LORD!***

People place their hope in all kinds of things because without hope we lose the will to live.

But if what you place your hope in is untrue, then your hope is meaningless!

Listen to what one person said about hope and I can't imagine living a life like this, but here is what he has to say. He wrote,

If you expect the best, there are two possible outcomes: a) what you want to happen, happens, and you are satisfied; or b) it doesn't happen and you are disappointed. You win, or you lose.

Now say that you aren't hoping for the best. The two possible outcomes are: a) what you want to happen, happens, and you are satisfied; or b) it doesn't happen but you aren't disappointed because you had no expectations. No losing there.

What is the point in hope?

Unlike its opposite, fear, which can prevent people from endangering themselves, it doesn't have any practical use. All it does is set you up for disappointment.

In the case that something good happens it doesn't really matter whether you were hoping for it or not, you'd appreciate it either way.

Hope is pointless.

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I disagree. I believe we need to have hope. Hope is very powerful in our lives for without it we would just give up!

Let me show you what I mean regarding hope. And as you will see, hope is very important in our lives and more specifically, our hope needs to be in Jesus Christ!

Many years ago, there was a study done in California with wharf rats or rats that lived by the water.

The first group of these wharf rats was placed in water and after about 16 minutes of trying to swim they would give up and die, they would drown.

Then they used another group of wharf rats, placed them in the water for 15 minutes, then they took them out, dried them off, gave them something to eat, and then they placed them back in the water.

They repeated this several times until finally they just left them in the water to see how long they would last.

Interestingly enough, these wharf rats didn't last 16 minutes, 32 minutes, not even 2 hours, but they lasted some 32 hours!

What happened?

What was the difference?

One group had no hope while the other group did!

You see, without hope there is no point in going on, but with this other group of wharf rats, they had hope that they would be rescued, and it encouraged them to go on.

The only problem is, like I have said, if you place your hope in something that is hopeless, you are going to be discouraged, disappointed, you will lose hope eventually.

Thus, we need to place our hope in the Lord because He alone has given to us eternal life and that eternal life is only found in Him and it is a guarantee.

We have a place reserved for us in heaven by God that no one can take away!

And one day we will see Him face to face!

And I like what Peter does here. This hope in Christ is focused on His return!

Why is that so important?

Because this world is getting more and more evil and if we believed that there would be no end to this, that it would continue on like it is or get worse, we would lose hope. But we don't have to because Jesus is coming back one day, and this world will be transformed as righteousness flows from His throne!

It is as Paul said in Romans 5:5, "**Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.**"

Thus, holy living demands determination – set your hope fully upon Jesus!

Next, Peter warns us by saying - ***DON'T CONFORM YOURSELVES TO THE FORMER LUSTS!***

In other words, as Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:1-3, "**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**"

You see, we are a new creation in Christ and no longer are we controlled by the flesh but by the Spirit.

Thus, what God is doing on the inside of our lives is then manifested outwardly, how we conduct ourselves.

We no longer meander through life without direction, but God is guiding us, and we live accordingly.

But we do need to – ***GET SERIOUS*** and live out our Christian faith. We need to – ***GET SERIOUS*** and set our minds on the things of God, pay attention to all that is going on and don't let evil get into your life, into your mind and we are to rest our hope on Jesus and His return and as obedient children, we need to live a life that is according to the high calling by which we have been called!

I am absolutely convinced that the reason so many Christians are still living worldly lives is because they're still thinking worldly thoughts.

Their minds are still conformed to this world's way of thinking, and they have not allowed them to be transformed by the renewing that comes from God's Word.

Why is this such a big deal?

Because of what Peter says next – ***BE HOLY!***

VERSES 15-16

Peter just lays it all out and he tells us - ***BE HOLY BECAUSE GOD IS HOLY!***

Please understand that Peter does not say that we are to be as holy as God is because that will never happen in these bodies of flesh.

But we are to seek holiness!

Now you may be wondering, ***“Pastor Joe, why does this holiness matter so much?”***

Because the holiness of God is the foundation upon which His character rests upon.

And for us, it is not that we get saved and we are holy, not even close.

Like I have said, the idea here really is the sanctification process. And this journey is a continuous journey as we surrender our lives to the Lord!

We honor the Lord with our lives not just words, which can be empty!

That means we need to surrender to the Holy Spirit's leading as He is shaping our lives, our thoughts, our desires, our behaviors to align them with God's perfect will or – **BE HOLY!**

To do this you have to forsake the things of this world, the passions of this world that are trying to draw you away from the Lord.

And when I say that I am speaking of the world system which the Devil is in control of.

Remember what we are told in Isaiah 6:1-3, **“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; The whole earth is full of His glory!’”**

When Isaiah had an encounter with the living God, when he saw the holiness of God, how did he respond?

We don't have to guess because we are told in Isaiah 6:5, **“So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts.’”**

When Isaiah saw the Lord, he realized how he stood before the Lord, and he saw himself as unclean.

And it was the Lord who cleansed him, and it is the Lord who will cleanse us from all our sin, and it is the Lord who will work on us in this sanctification process to – **BE HOLY!**

Let me also say this because we may not understand what this word **“holy”** means.

The word “**holy**” speaks of being set apart, and we are to be set apart for God.

Again, the idea is that we are God’s children, born again by the power of God and thus, we need to live accordingly.

Paul, in Ephesians 1:3-4 tells us, “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.**”

You see, that is the standard that God has set, and He is calling us to live that way, to be holy.

“But I can’t do that?”

Yes, that is partially true, and we will deal with that in a minute.

But what I want you to see here is that Peter is not saying we are to be as holy as God is, we are to be holy like God is, as I have said!

We will never be holy as God is, but far too often we set the bar so low anyone can attain it.

Before we get to dealing with how we can accomplish this, listen to what Paul says to the Thessalonians regarding this issue of sanctification or that process that God is using to purge the garbage from our lives and to make us more like Him.

We are told in I Thessalonians 4:1-12, **“Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit. But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more; that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and that you may lack nothing.”**

God’s will for our lives is sanctification, that we would be holy as He is holy.

This is a work of God in our lives. We can’t accomplish this by our own efforts.

Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:23-24, **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”**

God is doing the work, and it says that He will complete it.

If that is true, and it is, why do I feel like a failure in what I do?

Because of the fact of not surrendering to God. Allowing the things of this world to draw you away from what God is doing in your life.

And I realize that it is not easy, but what a joy to walk in holiness and see the fruit that God brings forth from a relationship like that.

We need to listen to what God is saying and then obey what He is saying!

But how can we do that?

Yes, the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak!

I know that God wants me to – ***BE HOLY!***

But how can I accomplish that?

That is our next point – ***GOD IS OUR HELP!***

VERSE 17

Folks, we can call upon the Lord, our Father and ask Him to help us to live a life that is pleasing to Him and He will give us the power to do that.

You see, He has called us to be holy and our response is that we are to walk accordingly!

We also need to understand that God is going to judge us, not for damnation if we are saved, but for rewards and He will convict us of our sin if it is needed.

Keep in mind that Peter is speaking to believers here and thus, the judgment speaks of ***PRACTICAL*** judgment, which deals with chastening and discipline.

Paul spoke of this in Hebrews 12:5-7 as he wrote, **“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten?”**

Because we, as believers are children of God, He will discipline us, not because He hates us but because He loves us and wants what is best for our lives!

The other point here in this judgment of believers is that you can ***LOSE YOUR REWARDS!***

We see John speak of this in II John 1:8, where he wrote, **“Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.”**

And in I Corinthians 3:12-15 Paul tells us, **“Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.”**

We won’t lose our salvation but, at the Bema Seat of Christ or the Judgment Seat of Christ we can lose our rewards. And like John said, don’t conduct yourself in such a way that you lose those things that you worked for, those rewards that God has for you!

Thus, as Peter tells us, **“... conduct yourselves throughout the time of your sojourning here in fear.”** I Peter 1:17.

In other words, while you are here on earth, walk according to the high calling by which you have been called and do it in fear of the Lord!

And Peter also tells us that God shows no partiality towards us, He doesn't have a favorite, or a "*teachers' pet*" you might say.

You see, that would be inconsistent with His character, His nature. He will chasten us because we are His children and when we go astray, He loves us so much that He will do whatever it takes to bring us back.

We are told in Proverbs 9:10, "**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.**"

When Solomon and Peter speak of fear they are speaking of a reverential fear and if need be, a fear of knowing that our God is a consuming fire!

Like I have said, we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ or the Bema Seat of Christ, not for judgment as Christians, but for rewards!

Paul, in II Corinthians 5:9-10 tells us, "**Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.**"

Yes, in this life God is still molding and shaping us and He will chasten us when needed because He is working on us down here to fit in up there!

It is as John tells us in I John 3:2, "**Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.**"

We long for that day!

Now it all boils down to this, as Paul said in I Thessalonians 2:10-12, **“You are witnesses, and God also, how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father does his own children, that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.”**

May we walk accordingly and set our hope fully on the Lord Jesus Christ and all those precious promises He has given to us!

And the reality is, we can do this because – ***GOD IS OUR HELP!***

Which leads to the last point and the wonderful news of what God has done in our lives and that should cause us to walk accordingly!

What is that good news?

The good news is that – ***GOD HAS REDEEMED US!***

VERSES 18-21

Now you may be thinking, ***“How has God helped us?”***

And if you are struggling with that as you look at your life, the difficulties you are facing, here is the answer – ***GOD HAS REDEEMED US!***

Peter speaks of our redemption, and this is an interesting concept and well-known to the people of Peter’s day.

You see, there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire, and often they were bought and sold like pieces of furniture!

Also, in the center of every Greek city stood the agora or the marketplace and it was here where slaves were bought and sold.

And for a few gold coins it could free a Roman slave, but freedom from sin is much, much more costly. It requires the *precious blood* of the *perfect lamb* of God. Our redemption has been paid for not by *precious metals*, but by the *spotless blood* of Jesus Christ.

And I want you to see how Peter makes this point for us.

You see, there are three different Greek words for “*redemption.*”

One of the Greek words for the act of redemption (the purchasing of a slave) is *agorazo*.

There’s a second word for redemption that the Greek reader of Scripture would readily understand, *exagorazo*, or “*the act of purchasing or redeeming never to return.*”

You see, oftentimes, a man would buy a slave, use him for the cultivating and planting of his fields or the harvesting his crops, and then return him to the marketplace to be sold again.

Exagorazo was the exact opposite of this practice, in that it spoke of permanent possession.

The third Greek word for redemption is *apolutrosis*.

Apolutrosis speaks of a man going into the agora to purchase a slave for the purpose of setting him free totally and completely never to be a slave again.

Paul uses this third Greek word in Colossians 1:14 where he tells us, “**in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.**”

What Paul is saying is that Jesus Christ has purchased us from the slavery of sin and has set us free, never to be returned as a slave any longer!

And we were not purchased with silver or gold but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ!

You see, Peter is telling us that it cost Jesus His life to redeem us, to purchase us back or to pay the price for our sin.

What is the point in regard to what he has been talking about, sanctification and holy living?

Because of what Christ has done, Peter is calling for us to live accordingly!

In other words, God has done all this for you and knowing that should help us to have a walk that is worthy of the high calling by which we have been called.

You see, it was not by our good works, the keeping of the Law, our aimless conduct that saves us.

No, it is by the precious blood of Christ that was shed for our sins.

Throughout church history people have been led to believe that you can buy things from God, that you can buy your way into heaven.

Remember Simon in Acts chapter 8 who practiced sorcery and had a pseudo conversion experience.

When he saw the power of the Holy Spirit fall upon the believers in Samaria he wanted to buy that power – but Peter rebuked him saying, “**. . . ‘Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!’**” Acts 8:20.

We see this portrayed in the Roman Catholic Church with its indulgences where you buy a candle, a Mass card, this and that so you can buy your way out of Purgatory and get into heaven.

But Peter tells us you can’t purchase this gift of life because the shedding of the precious blood of Jesus Christ has already paid for it.

You see, the rich, the poor, the middle class, anyone who comes to Jesus can freely receive the gift of life because it was paid for by the shedding of His blood and not by my efforts, not by the money I have in my possession!

I want you to also notice that Jesus, the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world was a perfect sacrifice.

There was no “**blemish**” or acquired sin in His life.

There was no “**spot**” or inherited sin in His life.

Thus, Paul tells us in II Corinthians 5:21, “**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**”

You see, we could never pay for our own sins because we have many blemishes in our life, or we have sin in our life.

Not only that, but we also have a big spot in our life or that sin that has been passed down to us through Adam!

If Jesus had a blemish or spot, He could not have been our Redeemer, but He didn't and thus, He paid in full the penalty for our sin.

Praise God for His love for us and His sacrifice so that we can live with Him for eternity if we receive Him into our lives!

As some look at what happened to man, his falling into sin, they think that then God had to come up with a plan to fix the problem, to save man from his sin. That is not the case, not at all. And Peter speaks of that in I Peter 1:20.

Peter is telling us, that even before man was created, before God laid the foundations of this world, Jesus knew what He would have to do to redeem man from his sin!

We see this spoken of in Revelation 13:8, where we are told that Jesus is, “**. . . the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**”

Also, in Galatians 4:4-5 as Paul wrote, **“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”**

That is love folks!

Think about that for a minute.

And you know what, if I was God, and I knew my creation would turn against me and I would have to put on a body of flesh and blood, die for their sins, their rebellion, I would grab another lump of clay and start over. I wouldn't have made this creation in the first place.

But God did!

That is – ***LOVE!***

He knew what it would cost Him, and He still created us, and again, that just shows us how much He loves me, how much He loves you!

In fact, in John 3:16-17 Jesus tells us, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

And John was right when he wrote in I John 4:19, **“We love Him because He first loved us.”**

Let me explain it like this and you will see how this plays out with this true story.

We are told,

The Vietnam War was mercifully drawing to a close during my middle-school years. And that meant that young men who had been sent over to fight were now returning to the states.

Each one needed a fresh start on life. For one man that meant enrolling at Judson College. I never knew the man by name, but I regularly saw him from a distance of a hundred yards.

Judson College is on the Fox River in Illinois; my dad's office in the Athletic Department was a wedge shot from its banks. I could see the river from the gym. During the frigid winter months, the man stood alone along the river's frozen edge, tending a covey of ducks. He fed them. He cut through the ice to open up an area of water for them. In short, he met their every need during the cold season. Every day.

I asked my dad why the man cared so much about the ducks. I will never forget the story he told: "He has just returned from the war in Vietnam. The story is that ducks saved his life. His unit had been ambushed. Many of his friends had been killed, and while he hadn't been shot, he lay down to look like he had. He hoped they would go away. But they didn't.

The enemy kept coming. Through the fields they came. They'd put one more shot in every fallen man to ensure that he was dead. But suddenly a covey of ducks flew overhead, and the attention of the soldiers was diverted. In their excitement they began running after the ducks to shoot at them instead. In the end, they stopped checking the field for men and left. That's how the man down by the river escaped. And now he has a special love for ducks. He loves because he lives."

- David R. Helm, 1 & 2 Peter and Jude – Sharing Christ's Sufferings, p. 65

Make no mistake about it, we love the Lord because He first loved us and that love for us is seen in the sacrifice that He made to save us from our sins!

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 1:1-3, **“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”**

And when you look at the evidence for the resurrection, and many have, the only conclusion you can come to is that Jesus did rise from the dead, the evidence speaks for itself!

Thus, our faith and hope are not based in fantasy but in truth, a reality!

Our faith is not empty, it is not futile, our hope is not in nothing, but in the truths of God found in the Word of God!

Thus, may we not only appropriate the truths of God into our lives but also share them with others so they can come to the saving faith as they place their lives into the hands of Jesus and walk by faith in the hope of God’s promises!

It is as Paul said in Ephesians 2:11-12, **“Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh - who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands - that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.”**

You see, outside of Christ, outside of God there is no real hope and when you talk with people today, many are feeling this way.

But in Titus 1:1-3 Paul tells us, **“Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God’s elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began, but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior.”**

You see, our hope is secure because it is based in God and His Word and God cannot lie, what He has told us is truth and what He has promised He is more than able to bring to pass!

As we have seen this morning, we need to – ***GET SERIOUS*** about our faith and obey what God is showing us!

And what is God showing us?

He is showing us that we need to – ***BE HOLY!*** Not as holy as God, because no one can, but we are to submit our lives to the leading of the Holy Spirit and walk according to that high calling by which we have been called!

And I realize that we can’t do this on our own, but God never tells us to do it on our own. He sent His Spirit to empower us to live holy lives.

In other words – ***GOD IS OUR HELP!***

And the wonderful gift that God has given to us is redemption, we have been set free from the bondage of sin and we can have a relationship with All Mighty God – ***GOD HAS REDEEMED US!***

May we live our lives in such a way that we would honor God in all that we do – ***BE HOLY!***